Anti-Poverty Network Celebrates Win for Low-Wage Workers

June 29, 2015

New Jersey’s Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) will be seeing a 50% increase (to 30% of the federal EITC) thanks to last-minute bipartisan agreement to expand this vital program for low-wage workers. “This is a victory for the hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans who are working hard but struggling to get by on low wages” stated Serena Rice, Executive Director of the Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey (APN). “It is also a victory for the state, because it is a move to investment in our people, and in a program that has been shown to stimulate economic growth.”

The EITC has long been a top priority of the advocacy network. Earlier this month the Anti-Poverty Network convened a round table discussion earlier this month to highlight the importance of the EITC in the lives of low-wage workers. The roundtable gave the opportunity for three workers to share their individual stories with state and local leaders, including Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, who sponsored the legislation to increase the EITC. Sherry Rubel, a substitute teacher who spoke at the roundtable, expressed excitement after hearing about today’s vote. “I’m ecstatic. This year, without the EITC I would not have gotten anything back from my taxes, and now it will mean close to $600. That can be the difference for being able to eat for the month, or pay for gas to get to work, or be able to save a little extra in case the car breaks down. This is just great.”

“An increase in New Jersey’s EITC program will have a tremendous effect on the lives of thousands of our neighbors across the state who are struggling everyday to pay for the basic necessities of life,” said Jim Jacob, President of the APN Board and President & CEO of NJ Shares.

Rice celebrated the bipartisan action that lead to the increase. “APN has highlighted the value of this investment in budget conversations with members of both parties, and we strongly believe that this is a program everyone can get behind. We are glad the Governor Christie has finally acted to increase this investment in low-wage workers, and we are grateful for the leadership of
Senate President Sweeney, as well as Assembly Speaker Prieto, for acting quickly on this opportunity.”

**About APN**
The purpose of the Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey is to *prevent, reduce, and end poverty in New Jersey*. Our primary strategies for accomplishing this goal are information-sharing, community education, partnership building, providing a framework for public discourse, and organizing advocacy to address the causes, effects, and remedies of poverty. For more information about APN visit www.antipovertynetwork.org

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